

March 2023

Robert Land Academy The Loyalist

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The John Brant Award recipient

Tim Hudak
Board Chair

On behalf of the Board of Governors of Robert Land Academy I am pleased to announce Christine Elliott is the recipient of the 2023 John Brant Award.

I've known Christine for almost 25 years, and I know that her work, both in public office and in

the private sector, as well as her philanthropy and personal values align with the values of the Academy.

Christine, former Minister of Health and Deputy Premier, has shown strong leadership overseeing the province's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, expanding access to health care, investing in mental health and empowering health care providers such as nurses, pharmacists, and paramedics to better utilize their experience and expertise in the health care system.

It was an easy call to ask her to be my Deputy Leader when I was Leader of the Ontario PC Party and my judgement proved to be right.

Christine has a long



resume with many accomplishments, both as a Member of Provincial Parliament and in her life outside of public service as a lawyer. Christine, along with her husband James Flaherty (Jim) was a founding partner of Flaherty, Dow, Elliott & McCarthy. Later, Christine and Jim co-founded Abilities Centre in Whitby, Ontario, which supports and celebrates the abilities of all people and is a place where everyone belongs, regardless



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A Company Report

An incredible March Break trip to France

MBar Antoni

If your school offered a trip to travel to France to see historical sites, Paris and the French countryside, would you go? The Fall Ex had just ended and while I was waiting for Halloween, I heard about an Academy trip to France and immediately thought this was really a town in northern Ontario, until a skype call with my Mom. She mentioned a trip to France was possible and asked if I wanted to go. "Sure, why not," I replied. Next thing I knew, Lt. Heida was telling me to turn up in her classroom to learn about the itinerary, and logistics of the trip. During multiple classes, she informed us about what historical sites, museums and landmarks we were going to visit. We all had our fingers crossed that we could get to tour the Eiffel Tower. As the March Break got closer, we had more classes to learn about more details of the trip.

Before I knew it, we were dashing off to Pearson International Airport, ready to fly to France. During the seven-and-a-half-hour flight to Paris, I tried to get some of my homework done, eat as many in flight snacks as I could get my hands on, and the best action movies Air Canada had to offer.

As soon as we collected our checked luggage, we ran around the Paris airport like headless chickens searching for the Van rental counter. We were so very thankful that our newly acquired tour guide was able to navigate the airport and routes for us.



Spoiler alert, the tour guide drove the peppy van through the narrow, cobble stone streets with expertise, making every sharp turn with ease, ensuring we did not waste time getting lost in older neighbourhoods. The lush, green rolling hills that seem to go on forever, the antique-looking windmills spinning in sequence, the expertly groomed fields of crops, all made our countryside trips very vivid and impressive.

During the week, the best part of the trip for me was when we visited the D-Day Memorial Museum. Unlike traditional museums we were able to hold artifacts, try on historical uniforms, sit in historically active vehicles. Being able to sit in the cockpit of a Typhoon and feel what it must have felt like for an allied pilot in WW2, but just a bit shorter, was exhilarating. Being able to handle flame throwers (non-operational), Panzerfaust's, Thompson machine guns

(not loaded), hand grenades and Luger pistols was amazing to compare the weight and feel of the weapons to more modern ones we have now.

Before we left the Museum, we were able to sit in the back of a deuce and a half and experience what troops from World War 2 felt riding in the back of this transport. We all had our fingers crossed that they would take us out for a spin through the small town to see the memorial. We were given a picture of a house with a burned-out Panzer tank off to the side. Once I dropped the picture the house that was now replacing the picture was exactly the same house! Exactly where I was standing a Panzer Tank had been taken out by allied forces from that house. It was an erie, mind-boggling feeling.

An equally impressive point on the trip was Normandy Beach.

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Message from the Headmaster

The importance of teamwork

P.D. (Pete) Stock, BSc, MSc, MA.
Acting Headmaster

As the good weather approaches, many of us are looking forward to playing outdoor sports, myself included! Whether it's soccer, basketball, or volleyball, playing sports is a great way to have fun, stay active, and build important life skills. And one of the most important of those skills is teamwork. I've played a lot of team sports over the years and still do! I can attribute great memories to being part of a team and genuinely believe this skill had helped me develop into a leader.

Teamwork is the ability to work together effectively towards a common goal. In the

context of sports, that goal might be winning the game or scoring a goal, but the principles of teamwork apply to all areas of life. Whether you're working on a school project, volunteering in the community, or pursuing a career, the ability to work effectively with others is crucial. In my time at the Academy as acting Headmaster I have learnt to the true importance of and value of teamwork.

So why is teamwork so important? For one thing, it allows us to achieve more than we could on our own. When we work together with others who have different strengths and perspectives, we can come up with more creative solutions, make

better decisions, and accomplish more in less time. Additionally, working with others can help us develop important interpersonal skills, such as communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution.

In sports, teamwork is particularly important. Whether you're playing on a school team or just shooting hoops with friends, working together is essential to success. Sports require players to communicate with each other, trust each other, and support each other. Without teamwork, even the most talented individuals can't achieve their full potential.

But teamwork isn't always easy. It requires effort, patience, and a willingness to compro-



mise. It also requires a commitment to putting the team's goals ahead of our own individual desires. But the rewards are worth it. When we work effectively with others, we not only achieve more, but also build stronger relationships, increase our sense of belonging, and enhance our personal growth.

So as we look forward to the warmer weather and the opportunity to play outdoor sports, let's remember the importance of teamwork. Whether we're on the field or off, working with others towards a common goal is a crucial skill that will serve us well throughout our lives.

I am looking forward to the spring and summer terms at the Academy and the showcase events coming up.



An incredible March Break trip to France cont’d

We visited Juno, Sword, Omaha, Gold, Normandy beaches and others. However, the stories of the Rangers having to scale the steep cliffs using grappling guns and ladders to disable German heavy artillery in the elevated bunkers. During one of our tours of the underground bunkers the tour guide talked about how the Allies would mistakenly throw grenades into the ventilation shafts of the bunkers, only to realize that the grenade would end up through an exhaust vent at their feet. A clever design that unfortunately led to many allied troops being killed by their own grenades.

Just before we got to Vimy Ridge, we had a tour on Trench Warfare on a battlefield. We had the opportunity to stand in the trench that the Allies occupied facing the German trench. It was terrifying how close they were, approximately twenty feet apart. It was taught to us that even though they

were supposed to kill one another, on Christmas Day they would stop shooting and sing Christmas carols with each other. In this trench, the Allies had tunneled under the German trench and detonated explosives beneath the German trench, leaving giant craters and many German casualties.

Despite at times being rushed, or not having enough vending machines available for snacks, this was an incredible trip. Being able to learn about World War II history, visiting countless museums, climbing the Eiffel Tower, visiting the Arc de Triomphe, the Louvre, the French countryside, erie Allied and German cemeteries was a collective experience I will always be thankful for. Multiple staff members at the Academy have asked me if I have the chance to go back, would I? In a heartbeat...in a heartbeat! I will never forget my great experiences on this trip. Thank you, Lt.s Heida and Lewis. Vive le France!

Many compliments for the students

Paul Zahra
ASM

Good day gentlemen, I would like to start off by thanking all the boys that were involved with the setting up and running of the Chamber of Commerce breakfast at the Academy on March 8th, from the boys working in the parking lot, escorting guests to the Mess Hall, serving the breakfast and the tour of the Academy, I could not have asked for a better group of boys. I had many compliments from our guests on how polite, well mannered, and informative you were. Our guests were literally blown away by your

conduct. I spoke with a couple of guests, and they remarked on your interaction with them. They commented to me about the youth of today spending more time looking at their phones and not being able to interact with people, that was not the case with you. They were impressed by how you were well spoken polite young men that could carry on a conversation, and not being consumed by their phones. I had one lady that wanted to send her 25-year-old son to us, she wanted her son to be like you. That is a great compliment to the boys that helped with the day. Gentlemen, please and

thank you, holding doors for people and lending a hand, not just at the Academy but at home in your everyday life, helping someone in need. These are skills that have fallen by the wayside, people do not take the time to help other people these days. Everyone is in such a rush and consumed by their phones that they do not take the time to see what is going on around them or to notice other people that may be in need. Manners cost you nothing to use, when you use them, you get paid back ten times over with a good feeling inside and you will have made a positive effect on



someone that may be having a difficult day. Through your positive actions you may have turned their day around. I have said this and wrote about this numerous times, for those boys that helped with our guests from the Chamber of Commerce your actions were noticed and talked about well done.

The John Brant Award recipient continued

of their challenges. In addition, she has held positions on a range of boards in the health care sector since becoming involved as a volunteer with several charities including the Lakeridge Health Whitby Foundation, Durham Mental Health Services, and Grandview Children’s Centre.

This service to the province and her community, along with her strong

values that she has passed on to her sons John, Galen, and Quinn, are the reason she was nominated and chosen as this year’s award recipient. This award recognizes leaders in the community, in public service, education or the military, who embody the five values of Robert Land Academy: loyalty, labour, courage, commitment and honour.

The John Brant Award will be presented at the Academy’s Gala Event,

Saturday June 10 at the Academy. Past recipients of the award are The Honourable Rob Nicholson in 2020 (presented in 2022 due to pandemic); General Walter Natynczyk in 2019 and Dave Levac, then Speaker of the Ontario Legislature in 2018.

For more information on the award visit www.rla.ca. For information on the Gala Event, visit <https://trel-lis.org/rlagala>

Health & Safety

MWO Chris Kivell
Health & Safety Committee

As Spring has sprung let’s talk about driving factors. Not everyone drives well. Some people speed aggressively. Others wander into another lane because they aren’t paying attention or they’re multitasking (e.g., talking on the phone, texting, checking messages, or eating). Aggressive drivers can be a hazard to themselves and others who are sharing the road. Drivers may follow too closely, make sudden turns without signalling, or weave in and out of traffic. The length, width, and weight of large trucks can create hazards for drivers of both small and large vehicles. However, many fatal collisions between cars and trucks are caused by the car driver’s error.

Identify controls
Follow these tips to make the highways—and your next drive—a lot safer.

- Consider stopping distances. Trucks need a much longer braking distance than cars. Don’t cut in front of a truck. If you do that, it reduces the truck’s braking distance and limits the evasive action a truck driver can take.
- Pass carefully. When passing a truck, do not drive alongside it for too long. Pass as quickly and safely as possible, and don’t cut too closely in front of a truck when re-entering the lane.

- Drive defensively. Do not assume another driver is going to move out of the way or allow you to merge. Expect that drivers may run through red lights or stop signs and be prepared to react. Be considerate of others but look out for yourself. Have an escape route planned.
- Maintain an optimal position. In all driving situations, the best way to avoid potential danger is to position your vehicle where you have the best chance of seeing and being seen.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Check your mirrors frequently and scan conditions 20 to 30 seconds ahead of you. Keep an eye out for stalled vehicles at the roadside, tow trucks, emergency responders, bicyclists, and pedestrians.
- Follow the two-second rule. Since the greatest chance of a collision is in front of you, establish and maintain a safe following distance that provides enough time for you to brake to a stop if necessary. The recommended time-interval following distance is one second for every three metres of vehicle length. For a typical five-metre car, that would be two seconds.
- Keep your speed down. Posted speed limits are meant for ideal driving conditions. It’s your responsibility to ensure that your speed matches the actual conditions.
- Eliminate distractions. A distraction is any activity that diverts your attention away from the task of driving. Driving deserves your full attention. Stay focused on the driving task.

Why are there no subsidies available for private school?

Dr. David Harley

Ontario parents often ask if there are any tax considerations to offset private school fees or any subsidies offered by the government. Given that their taxes are directed towards supporting the public system whether their child attends or not, this is a legitimate question. The short answer is that there are none. Curiously, Ontario is the only province in Canada that does not fund private schools in one form or another. British Columbia provides subsidies in two tiers of 35% to 50%, Alberta up to 60%, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Quebec up to 50%. So why is this? The answer, it appears, involves self-interest, money and political influence.

In 2003 the Ontario Liberals, in keeping with their election promise to repeal the tax credits for private school supporters introduced by the Conservatives, put forward a bill to repeal those tax credits on their first day in legislature. This was one of the promises that they kept. Why was this an issue of sufficient importance in Ontario to require this level of election exposure and priority of legislative attention? Clearly it was intended to attract votes not from the general population but specifically from a militant block who would perceive this issue as being a top priority and overwhelmingly support it.

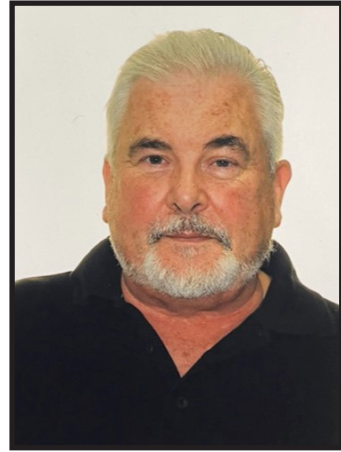
The Ontario Teachers

Federation or OTF possesses assets in the amount of some 200 billion dollars and is Canada's largest single profession pension plan. The Ontario budget for 2022-2023 for public education amounted to 26.3 billion dollars. Between 2020 and 2021 the number of employees on the posted Sunshine List of salaries in excess of \$100,00.00 per year for the Toronto District School Board or TDSB alone rose from 3,429 to 10,549 members. Despite the dwindling number of students in Ontario and the closing of many local schools, the cost of education has continued to increase and threatens to continue. Hundreds of thousands of teachers and others are directly or indirectly employed in the public educational system. But however much money is spent, it is never enough. Indeed, the messaging is very clear that according to vested interests the public system is underfunded and that more money is needed to meet the system's needs. As such, the Conservative party is associated with cutbacks, cost reductions and has therefore been consistently characterized as being opposed to giving the system the money that it needs to do its job.

The published mission statement of the TDSB sounds impressive indeed. It is "To enable all students to reach high levels of achievement and well-being and to acquire the knowledge, skills and values they need to become responsible, contributing

members of a democratic and sustainable society." However, it is always important to balance rhetoric against substance. To use the public system's own imposed standard of a rubric against which to measure student achievement relative to "learning outcomes", how does the public system fare? But then who is in a position to assess this and proclaim its level of success in any objective and meaningful manner. Surely not the system itself. However, that is in fact the reality of the situation. The assessment of the success of the system is offered by the system itself without reference to any meaningful external scale. Is this not similar to asking every student to determine their own merit without tests or examinations? However, by itself it is suggestive that despite what can only be viewed as the disincentives in Ontario for parents to support private education, that support continues to increase evidenced by the growing number of private schools and the growing attendance in them..

The explanation for the opposition to the 'public' funding of private schools that is put forward is in the characterization that private education is based upon exclusivity and a lack of egalitarian spirit. The supporters are therefore either snobs or misguided consumers who fail to recognize the strengths of the public system. You may ask yourselves therefore if you identify with this



characterization. Moreover, is it not odd that such hostility towards private education exhibits itself in the province with the largest funding and number of direct stakeholders in delivering that service apparently threatened by private competition? The growth of private alternatives devoid of financial incentives is a clear example of parents voting with their feet. Thus the threat of private alternatives is ultimately a question of money. In November of 2022 in British Columbia the headline appeared "BC Public Schools Facing Budget Shortfalls As Private Schools Receive Half a Billion in Public Subsidies". The article goes on to explain "Teachers voice concern over 'deep' cuts as experts question why BC diverts hundreds of millions in public resources to the private school system". One wonders of course who these experts are and then the question also arises if the public system is there to ultimately serve the interests of students or employees?

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Why are there no subsidies available for private school?

School boards receive funding on a per student basis. This is typically 70% from the respective province and 30% from municipalities in terms of property tax. School boards recently became increasingly interested in attracting international students to boost their numbers and bring money directly to their coffers. As such, the TDSB for example took to actively recruiting international students into the system. For some time they not only received the funds directly from the students themselves but also from the government in terms of a per capita head count. In 2019-20 the government recognizing this double dipping imposed a clawback of \$1,300.00 per student to be reduced from the grants provided. International students continue to be actively recruited by school boards throughout most of Canada. This is done mostly through agents. The TDSB as an example pays 15% of the tuition fees to agents for the first year and 10% per year thereafter should they re-enrol. This is apparently being increased to 18% as of next year. Prior to covid, the TDSB identified having 2,107 international students enrolled which dropped to 949 in 2021-22. Numbers have moved up over the last year but are nowhere near what they were previously.

The introduction of international students into the public system is framed in highly altruistic terms such as encouraging diversity and benefiting

students wanting to study in Canada. Clearly Toronto is in need of diversity. Housing is arranged either through independent agencies who recruit students or through a number of independent corporations arranging homestay programs with families. These are touted as excellent ways for international students to be accepted within the Canadian community. No doubt in a few cases this is true. In the majority of cases however, the homestay programs lack parental concern and supervision and are indeed largely powerless to enforce rules or restrictions should they take the effort to do so. Once again, the balance self-interest and money determines much of human behaviour.

According to our Ministry of Education, the history of educational theory and practice in this province has been one of continuous improvement building inexorably upon previous success. Each group of reforms touted as progressive makes things better and improves the delivery of service. But again, according to who and with what evidence or external reference? The majority of these reforms involve a focus upon third party optics and political correctness and are therefore reducible to rhetoric over reason. As a political organ, ministries are supposed to serve the interests of the public at large and be responsible to the government in power.

However, government ministries have a relatively stable number of employees who remain in their position regardless of the government at the time. The policies generated therefore represent a limited hybrid between political incentives imposed from above and internal adherence to 'progressive' standards normally imported from America. As such, there is a remarkable consistency between philosophies and approaches throughout Canada and the USA but with some provincial variation. In many instances these revisions in policy and practice are initiated just as their weaknesses start to become apparent south of the border. This was the case for example with the US lead in abandoning cursive writing in elementary schools but there are many other examples.

In truth, the public educational system has taken upon itself a vast variety of responsibilities once considered to be the sacred purview of the family. Schools have taken over the responsibilities of parents but not their accountability and one could even argue that they have indeed actively undermined parenting. Whereas it was the the ongoing assumption by many that the role of schools was to support parents it is now clearly the role of parents to support schools who support their children. Given that many of those values, attitudes and priorities are no longer in keeping with those of the parents, there is little choice

but to seek alternatives. Students are regarded in the public system as clients not their parents. Some appeasement is offered to avoid where possible outright hostility. However, invariably the schools position is to support the student over the parent and to underscore the rights of the former over the latter. Parents should not interfere, put pressure on or dictate to their children in matters of academics or post-secondary plans and careers. They are to support the dreams of their children to follow their own path regardless of how delusional such ideas may be. Hence a student that I met some years ago with failing grades and applied/modified courses told me of his plan to enter the University of Waterloo and study computer engineering. In this case, his 'plan' was equatable with 'dream' which was equally equatable with 'delusion'. Nobody had dared to confront him with the reality of his situation for fear of making him sad. When I realistically outlined his situation, he expressed disbelief and was then shocked and horrified to learn that he could not attend any university program subject to his willingness to attend and his parents ability to pay. Indeed, he confronted the situation with disbelief and had to be provided with hard facts to correct his opinion. That student was subsequently re-streamed, spent an additional year in high school and ultimately gained university admission. Continued next page

Why are there no subsidies available for private schools?

In point of fact, the school system itself and the peer culture encouraged within it has created many of the problems that increasingly frustrate those parents who believe in actually parenting. They find their beliefs and values undermined and ridiculed. They become the outliers and the alienation between parent and child leads inexorably towards conflict and confusion. They discover that their child's rights exceed their own and they are powerless to address situations constructively. In such cases, parents increasingly feel powerless and indeed victims of a system that fails them as well as their children.

Apart from presenting a monopoly whose only escape is to pay significant amounts of money for those who are capable, it became apparent during covid that one of the primary roles of public education is that of a daycare. Disruptions and the inconveniences resulting from strikes and the threat of strikes has generated funding increases based upon fear. Given that unlike the the 1950's and 60's most marriages and families involve both partners working, it is no small matter to have to deal with these situations when they arise. Indeed, given the existing economy, having both partners equally employed has become necessary to meet expenses. The prospect of strikes threatens not only an interruption in student learning, but also a major financial burden given the

additional expenses involved or a threat to the livelihood of the parents. This implicit coercion by what is in essence an essential service, has been used repeatedly to serve self-interest in a most compelling manner.

It remains to be seen therefore if the ultimate objective of the system as it exists is to serve students, to serve taxpayers or to serve the interests of those employed within it. Is there any legitimate reason to have a school day that does not conform to the hours of a regular work day or to have long holidays so that children can go home to help their family on the farm? Is there any reason why summer school is not mandatory to help students who fall behind to catch up or enrich their education? Is there any reason why children should not experience failure as well as success? Is there any reason why children should not be aware of their efforts and abilities relative to others?

I became a headmaster of a private preparatory school in Toronto in 1983 after leaving my university position. I had exclusive power to hire and fire staff. I quickly learned that poor teachers were a liability not only in terms of the students they taught but also their more accomplished colleagues and the existence of the school itself. I therefore started to view my staff as I would a professional basketball team. As the school only accepted students into a pre-university program in

Grade 12, I quickly found that teachers with advanced degrees were often better able to prepare students for the expectations of university than those with a pass BA and an OTC (Ontario Teacher's Certificate). Those who had personally exhibited a genuine love of leaning in pursuit of their studies were seemingly better able to impart that to their students. As a result, more than half of my teaching staff had Ph.D.'s or advanced degrees. I found that teachers with OTC's offered no guarantee of professionalism or competency and that the true measure of a good teacher was best based upon personality plus knowledge. The resulting staff was exemplary and there was a true sense of unity based upon the realization of a common commitment to learning and commensurately with teaching. When a decade later I became the headmaster of a unionized (OPSEU) private secondary school, I found that I was forced to offer the teaching of calculus during the summer to the English teacher who thankfully declined. Longevity of employment outweighed performance and any assessment of performance was severely impeded. After two years, I could stand it no longer.

Private schools are ultimately accountable to their clients for their continued existence. That existence depends upon fulfilling promises and being accountable. Schools

that fail to do so fail. The public system has no such safeguards to measure service and as such are largely unaccountable. Moreover their public funding and guaranteed employment engenders a sense of entitlement and complacency only enjoyed by other groups with similar funding. The central question remains whether or not the actual mission is to serve clients or serve themselves. I am not suggesting that the public system is devoid of merit or that there are no good people involved within it. However, I think that it is equally unrealistic to assert that self-interest is not an overwhelming sentiment of the majority of its stakeholders. Public money may be public but its origins are private citizens and as such should serve their interests rather than those of specific interest groups who absorb those funds without a commensurate level of contribution to the public at large.

Private schools provide healthy alternatives and approaches in keeping with the philosophy of a free market economy where the consumer gets to determine the quality of a product and how it satisfies their needs. The failure of communism is universally equated with the lack of competition inherent in that system and its economic consequences. If diversity is so desirable as we are so often told it is, why not encourage it in meaningful ways by

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viewing differences as potential sources of strength rather than has threatening competition. If the diversification of educational alternatives benefits students surely they are the priority. Moreover if there is increased accountability provided in terms of promises made and actually kept this can only be of ultimate benefit to society.

Therefore, if any of you living in Ontario wonder why there is no government support in place to support your choice of a private alternative, it has not been through a want of trying and nor through the absence of an active lobby of resistance. Should private schools be encouraged through financial incentives? If we are to take the push for diversity seriously, the answer can only be yes. The public system has increasingly become a top down arm of socialization rather than education in the narrow sense of reading, writing and arithmetic. Increasingly the push has been to endorse the politically correct read 'right' opinions rather than helping to develop the cognitive skill sets that allow each individual the freedom to reach those opinions.

These skill sets involve the development of critical thinking skills as well

as a basic background of knowledge within which to frame inquiry. It is important to have a mental landscape within which to frame the acquisition of knowledge. For this reason it was advocated that there should be a basic core curriculum of information that everyone should know in order to accomplish this. It also stands to reason that schools should be accountable as should the students they teach. A monolithic system provides a top down form of bureaucratic control whose ultimate objective can only be to promote mediocrity as opposed to meritocracy. It becomes indeed the very antithesis of the diversity that it claims to espouse.

Educational innovation can only take place fully in an open market

Educational innovation can only take place fully in an open market situation where parents can actively judge for themselves the value of the offering in terms of promises made and promises kept. A

mission statement such as appears for the TDSB is aspirational but provides no explanation as to how these objectives will be achieved and what measurements are in place to be able to judge their relative success. It is therefore ultimately meaningless and feeds into the general view growing by the day that words uttered by those who have power or are in power are meaningless.

Should the values of the family constitute a bottom up process to reflect those values on a larger scale or should values be a top down process imposed upon the families themselves?

At some point in time public and private education was ultimately accountable in terms of standardized tests in which basic skills were measured as well as a command of basic facts. Such tests did not test opinion as much as they tested the ability to form opinions rooted in a grasp of basic facts. Modern trends have increasingly reversed this process. Government ministries of education are increasingly concerned with how lessons are taught and the inherent meaning or messaging behind what is taught as a social value defined by them. Ironically older systems involved much less of this and yet produced literacy rates exceeding those that

are current. Abraham Lincoln purportedly wrote homework on the back of a shovel with chalk and attended a one room school house. Apparently without the benefit a a smart board or a tablet he was able to produce the Gettysburg Address. Equally, the shrinking vocabulary of modern times renders many books printed fifty years ago unreadable because of vocabulary and the use of words no longer in common usage. One need look only at a comparison of school textbooks over the last twenty years to see increased use of pictures, coloured charts or diagrams and bullet form text. Curiously also is the fact that with fewer and fewer words in circulation, the ability to express complex thoughts and feelings is ultimately reduced when language is not available to express them. A dumbing down of the general population is the inevitable result where feelings govern thoughts and emotions push towards conflict and polarization.

It is time to reverse this process. Education as the process whereby human beings acquire and transmit knowledge through experience is fundamental to humanity and increasingly fundamental to its survival both on a personal and global level.

Not teaching Math

Major Bill Simmons
Academic Officer

A clever student of mine told me that I was completely useless. He didn't need me. He could "learn this stuff on YouTube, and if you just gave me a calculator I could do it. I don't need to know my times tables when I can just use a calculator. And all of this stuff is on the internet, so I don't need to be here. I just need my phone. If I had my phone, I would be happy."

His peers in the class ironically and immediately began to protest his proclamation. I stopped their protestations. Because I agreed. If he had a calculator, he could give me the product of five and four. Unless the batteries were tired, the answer would be correct too. If he had YouTube, he could research just about any topic on any subject. From his utilitarian point of view, he was as correct: I am redundant. This clever student probably didn't expect me to agree with him. In fact, he probably didn't know that there was another clever student named Albert Einstein when asked how many feet are in a mile: "I don't know," Einstein replied, "why should I fill my brain with facts I can find in two minutes in a standard reference book?"

If I agreed with my irreverent student, and I agreed with Einstein, it forced me (like gravity... 9.8 m/s^2 ... $F=ma$) to accept my uselessness within the utility of education.

The next day we didn't do math in math class. I listed 12 ways to improve social skills, which included saying "please" and "thank you"; do not brag; do not respond to negativity; be humble...

I asked my students, "If you followed these principles, would you be at Robert Land Academy?" They all agreed they would not be. Teachers are not teaching Mathematics or English or History or Economics. They are teaching children. Happiness is not found on a phone. Happiness is found in the unexpected triumph over life's adversity and having the someone with whom to share it. That doesn't come from a calculator, YouTube, nor the internet.



Not your fault. It's your choice

Captain
Andrew Guy
Athletic Director

There's an old saying that says the only way to really know a person is to walk a mile in their shoes. Now, one could only imagine that walking a mile in someone else's shoe is only a metaphor to help you understand the premise that no two people are alike, and while we may share in the commonality of humanity, we are completely separated by our thinking and the power of choice.

It is crucial that we understand that while opportunities exist in abundance, our outlook on life (be it optimistic or pessimistic) usually dictates the realities of those opportunities. One who has a poor sense of self reduces how much s/he sees, but he who has a panoramic expectation will see the world and all its opportunities in a totally different light. You either see limitations or opportunities.

Imagine going into a department store, and there is a plethora of items to choose from but you only desire to purchase two of those items. The multiple items represent all the opportunities we encounter every day, while your desire to purchase only two items is a metaphor for the choices we must make. I hope you are making the connections here. So far, we have discussed opportunities, options/choices, but there's still one important part of the puzzle that is missing. Any idea what that could be? ...Gave up? Well, let me help you. Regardless of the number of opportunities that come your way, and the many choices you must make, everything we do boils down to one thing... decision. Yes, decision is our magic wand that changes everything.

Consider the world of sports and the many options you could participate in. Now, let's choose one, basketball, for example. In the game of basketball, you will have many opportunities to pass, shoot, or

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Not your fault. It's your choice cont'd

dribble the ball. It is your decision to exercise one or all the options at any given time during the game that determines if you win or lose. The question that we should be asking ourselves is this: Are we winning at living or losing at life? And how do we equate the outcome of winning or losing...? As you think about the sequences of events that occur daily, always remember that your outlook on life, your worldview and your

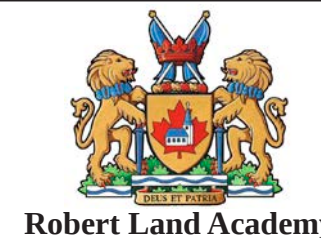
attitude towards people is crucial to your ability to exercise your power of choice.

Sometimes we blame others for our misfortunes, but the reality is that we seldom ponder the magical question of "HOW DID I GET HERE?" My answer to this simple but profound question is that somewhere along the way, choice got you there! Whatever happens for you is not your fault, it's a

matter of choice. Imagine the process of thinking were tools in a toolbox. Options are your negating tools, and choice is your willingness to participate, but decisions determine your destiny. Whether you choose to walk in someone else's shoe or your own, it does not matter how you start in life, but where you end up in living is not your fault...It's Your Choice. Choose wisely!

CALLING ALL THE OLDBOYS

Robert Land Academy
Homecoming
May 26 - 28 2023
trellis.org/homecoming-2023



Robert Land Academy

Annual Inspection & Open House

Saturday, May 13, 2023
11 am - 2 pm



Please join our students for interesting and interactive academic displays; adventure training demonstrations; Academy activities; and learn about life on campus at a military-inspired boarding school.

For planning purposes, please register to attend
www.rla.ca/openhouse

Bataan trip more than a marathon

Capt Brian Lee
C Coy Commander

The tale of BATAAN is steeped in historical facts about the atrocities of war and highlighted by human triumph in the face of tragic suffering and loss. The annual BATAAN Memorial Death March commemorates events that happened in the Pacific theater during the Second World War.

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japanese soldiers overran much of Southeast Asia. In an attempt to secure the city of Manila American and Filipino troops moved into the Bataan Peninsula. American soldiers were from multiple branches of the US military including the New Mexico National Guard. The combined force was isolated from support and cut off from all sources of resupply. On April 9, 1942, after three brutal months of fighting in extreme climate conditions, the Japanese defeated the American and Filipino army, resulting in surrender and imprisonment of these troops. These troops did not surrender in battle. They were surrendered. Entirely against their will. Their cry is “no Mama, no Papa, no Uncle Sam. We are the battling bastards of Bataan, and nobody gives a damn.” This captures the contempt with which their fight was halted against their will.

Upwards of 75 000 prisoners needed to be moved North to prison camps. Most were sick and wounded and in no shape to be moved as they were. The Japanese army led by Lieutenant General Masaharu

Homma marched prisoners roughly 65 miles. During the march prisoners were denied food, water, and medical treatment. Thousands died. Many were brutalized and executed by captors. At the end of the march prisoners were loaded into railcars, standing shoulder to shoulder like match sticks and transported another 75 miles. Roughly 54 000 prisoners survived. The remainder died on the march, or where they stood on the railcar. Survivors marched another 8 miles to Camp O’Donnell where they remained until being liberated in early 1945. General Homma was eventually captured and executed for war crimes against humanity.

There are many good interviews with survivors on Youtube. I would encourage all to go and watch these harrowing personal accounts.

Endurance athletes from around the globe descend on White Sands Missile Range to partake in the Memorial BATAAN Death March. A marathon distance event of 26.2 miles in the comfort of friendly surroundings and supportive volunteers. With every step all I can think about is how the distance and terrain must pale in comparison to the jungle heat the original prisoners suffered. Weakened by dehydration while being fed and watered by friendly volunteers my thoughts are overwhelmed by the reality of the brutalization endured by those on the death march who were already sick and dying. Unimaginable suffering. Their’s was a race for survival against disease, starvation and an enemy who was marching them to their death. Ours is a race to com-

memorate their suffering and loss.

Their march was broken into thirds. It began on the Southern tip of the Bataan Peninsula and followed the Eastern coastline along Manila Bay. The second third began at San Fernando as they were forced into overcrowded railcars. In the final third leg troops then marched another 8 miles to their final destination at Camp O’Donnell. Please take some time to look at the videos that are available. There are no words that can be written here that would do justice to their own accounts.

Our memorial race is also broken into thirds. It begins at 4303 feet of elevation at the heart of WSMR and continues along a sandy road towards the Northeast side of Antelope Hill. The footing is good here and you can move quickly. So we do, mostly at a jogging pace. There is much congestion and marcher traffic so it’s important for the team to weave through traffic and stay together in a single file. The second third takes marchers to a course high point at 5393 feet of elevation behind Mineral Hill Mountain. 2 miles of road at a steady incline up to 4600 feet are spent leaning over our boots and shuffling just a little faster than a brisk walk. Again, the footing makes it possible to move quickly, so we do. The elevation, and elevation gain make you suffer though. The elevation makes the air cool, but the sun is hot. Then there is the wind that picks up depending on where you are on the course. We are suffering, nothing like they did, so we press on in ease always mind-

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Bataan trip more than a marathon cont’d

ful of what they endured. Back in the sand and around Mineral hill the footing is not great. Watch where you step as every footstep counts towards minimizing the damage to feet and the blisters you hope don’t form. 8 miles in the sand around the mountain. Back to asphalt and down to 4370 feet at mile 20 is where things get difficult. Mile 20. The start of the final third and the beginning of the worst footing and a good amount of up and down that hurt you in every way. Mile 24.5. The footing is good! We can see the beautiful Organ mountains seated majestically behind the base. So close, but so far. It’s gut check time. How much will you deny yourself the comfort you so desperately want and move just a little quicker. Mile 26. 200 yards to go. Surrounded by the team, supportive volunteers, and cheering onlookers. The finish line. 26.2 miles. I am happy and proud of our accomplishment, but my thoughts remain with the memory of those who served, suffered, and made the ultimate sacrifice.

BATAAN is on most marathoners’ bucket list. Athletes usually dedicate a year to it understanding its historical and cultural significance. Most fear the elevation, typical mountain weather conditions, and dread the terrain and poor footing. Adding 30 – 60 minutes to your best marathon time is a realistic expectation. The average finish time was 8:34. Our team consisting of Corporal Stephan Paterson, Cadet Nick Thompson, Lt Paula Sinclair, CSM Luis Silva and Captain Brian Lee finished in 7:05 wearing boots, uniform, and carrying a hydration

pack. This is categorized as Military Light. To add context, the best military light team of professional soldiers finished in 7:35.

In addition to the BATAAN experience, we spent time in scenic Santa Fe and Albuquerque. Needing to quickly familiarize ourselves with how the body responds to physical strain at elevation far from what we are acclimated to, we

dropped down to the La Luz trail just below the summit ridge, hiking back to the tram to descend the mountain. In Santa Fe we visit the Bataan Museum, the State Capitol building and the town square in old Santa Fe where culture and history are absorbed. While at the Capitol building, referred to as the Round House, Senate was in session and the boys got to see American politicians in action advocating for their



climb Sandia Peak just Northeast of Albuquerque. There are several strenuous mountain scrambles to choose from. A mountain scramble is a steep hike on a trail taking you from the base of a mountain to its achievable high point. Doing the scramble in March means the hike is not in season, so we relied on snowshoes and hiking poles to navigate the snow and wintery terrain. This year we took the tram from the base of the mountain to its summit at 10 400 feet. There we hiked the summit ridge, then

constituents on political matters significant to the residents of New Mexico. Throughout our stay we are hosted by Sergeant Major Gerald Burkhart and Master Sergeant Abraham Fuentes of the New Mexico National Guard. Their hospitality and friendship are greatly appreciated. Without this support our BATAAN experience is not possible.

Alumni Committee Report

Homecoming & time capsule May 26-28

James Paterson
Alumni Committee Chair

The Alumni Association and staff of RLA are inviting alumni to Homecoming Weekend, May 26, 26 and 28.

The weekend is an opportunity to engage Old Boys both in connecting with other Alumni as well as current school events and students. The Homecoming weekend will feature a sporting tournament involving alumni, students and staff, as well as school tours and visit to the Quartermaster, rappelling, rock climbing, tug of war, campfire, and many opportunities to enjoy a meal together and catch up.

Robert Land Academy and the RLA Alumni Association are working to improve the school's connection to our alumni and foster a strong community of past students who take part in school events, speak to current students, and contribute to the school's success.

To recognize this connection, we are planning to bury a

time capsule during Homecoming.

Current students will be asked to write a letter to their future selves and it is out hope they will be on hand at some future date to dig up the time capsule and their letters.

We are also asking alumni to contribute letters either to the RLA student they once were or to their future selves, reflecting on how RLA has impacted your lives.

In addition, if you are willing to part with RLA memorabilia, we would appreciate being able to include some items in the time capsule as well.

We hope to see many alumni at the Academy at the end of May. Registration and more details about the weekend can be found at trellis.org/homecoming-2023.



RCAC Report

Cadets participate in marksmanship competition

OCdt. J.T. Lewis
2968 RCACC.

Cadets from 2968 RCACC recently competed against several other corps of the NGTA in a marksmanship competition.

On March 4 and 5th Robert Land Academy hosted the Niagara and Greater Toronto stage 1 marksmanship competition.

MCpl. Elias Braun, MCpl. Vidhya Petit, Cpl. Stephan Paterson, Cpl. Colton Bridges and Cpl. Johann Mayer competed in the competition against cadets from around the region.

Overall, the team finished 6th out

of 7th place.

"It was a great effort by our cadets," said 2968 RCACC commanding officer Leo Giovenazzo, CD. "It's really good to see them participate in these events, events like this helps to create team cohesiveness."

It was a difficult struggle for the cadets of 2968 as they were still learning about the principles of marksmanship as they neared the competition date.

"Braun couldn't seem to hit the target when he started preparing for the competition, but, after practice and working on some skill sets, he did well," Giovenazzo said.

Braun had a 56% average at the end of the competition.

The top shooters for the team were Paterson with a 74% average, followed by Petit with a 72.5% average.



Greetings from the Family Guild

Lisa Thompson
Family Guild Chair

By now, our boys have settled back at the Academy, after what was hopefully, a restful and enjoyable March break!

March break is a time of excitement and anticipation for students across North America, and at the Academy, it is no different. This year, the Academy was especially thrilled to be able to resume some of its long-standing traditions, including a school trip to France.

Students were excited to visit important, historically significant sites such as Vimy Ridge and Juno Beach. The trip was a valuable opportunity for the boys to gain a deeper understanding and depth of the sacrifices made by previous generations.

Another exciting activity during March break was the trip to The White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico to complete the Bataan Memorial Death March. This grueling challenge tested the boys' physical and mental stamina as they walked a

marathon-length course while carrying a weighted backpack. Through the experience, the boys learned about the incredible sacrifices made by soldiers in the Bataan Death March during World War II and gained a deeper appreciation for the values of courage and resilience.

Both the France trip and the Bataan Memorial Death March were powerful experiences that helped to build confidence, stamina, and resiliency in the boys. These traits are essential



for success not just in school, but in all areas of life. These traits also align with the high standards of Robert Land Academy and the five core values of loyalty, labour, courage, commitment, and honour all of which were on full display during these trips, as the boys demonstrated

Supporting The Academy

Why do we fund raise? Robert Land Academy is a not-for-profit organization. We receive no government funding, although we are inspected by the Ministry of Education. Our tuition fees cover operating costs only so special or extra programming, capital improvements and the Founder's Scholarship Fund are funded solely through donations from supporters like you.

RLA is currently raising funds to build the Founder's Scholarship Fund so we can help more boys find success.

All support, by attending events or donating directly to the school, is warmly appreciated and allows us to help our students reach their full potential in all areas of their lives.

Please visit
www.GiveToRLA.ca
for more information or to make a donation to the school.

Please contact Advancement Officer Sarah Whitaker for more information on donating securities; leaving a gift in your will; donations of in kind, such as materials or labour; and donor recognition.

RLA is a not-for-profit organization and donations are eligible for charitable tax receipts.



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RR 0001

www.GivetoRLA.ca